



Susan B. Anthony Project
SAFETY • HEALING • GROWTH

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Testimony of Jeanne Fusco, Executive Director
Susan B. Anthony Project, Inc.
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing
RE: Governor's Proposed FY 2018-2019 Budget

Thursday, February 23, 2017

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker and Members, Appropriations Committee;

My name is Jeanne Fusco. I am Executive Director of Susan B. Anthony Project, Inc. (SBAP), one of nine member programs of the CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence. SBAP serves 2 cities and 18 towns in northwestern Connecticut. We are a dual sexual assault crisis and domestic violence organization.

I am grateful for your work regarding the State of Connecticut budget deficit and acknowledge the difficult decisions that must be made by your committee and the legislature especially involving the Rape Crisis Line item in the Department of Public Health's budget. The Governor's budget recognizes the continued need for front line sexual assault crisis services and programs throughout our state. I ask the Appropriations Committee to acknowledge that continued need.

The core services of SBAP on behalf of sexual abuse and assault survivors include a:

- 24-7 hotline
- 1:1 bi-lingual/bi-cultural counseling and advocacy for women, children and men
- Support groups that address the specifics of sexual violence and resulting trauma
- Accompaniment; medically, with law enforcement and in court
- Active member Child Abuse Investigative Team (a multi-disciplinary team serving children who have experienced sexual abuse and non-offending parents/guardians)
- Prevention education for grades pre K-12, college and with professionals and community groups (7,000+ served in 2015-16)
- Member, Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Resource Team, Northwestern CT Community College, Winsted, CT

SBAP combines state funding with federal, private, and family foundation funding, as well as fundraising dollars, to engage individual and business support within our communities of service. In order to provide these wide ranging services, SBAP employs 4 full time sexual assault staff members and 1.5 prevention educators. Each and every state dollar lost jeopardizes the ability to respond to requests for our services.

For example, currently we provide on site services to the three long term substance abuse treatment centers meeting with men and women who identify childhood sexual abuse and adult sexual assault as triggers and contributors to their long term substance use and relapse. Delivering services in the rural, northwest corner of CT, which lacks a transportation infrastructure, often requires that SBAP reach beyond its own Counseling and Advocacy Center to deliver services. These collaborations are valuable to individuals and communities and that come with a cost for travel beyond staffing alone.

With deeper funding cuts, SBAP would need to consider whether we could continue to offer these vital services in northwestern Connecticut.

Our prevention educators see more than 5,000 new, unduplicated students in schools each year and an additional 1,000+ adults in this community of service. Recent budget cuts have already necessitated the reduction of one full time position to a half time one. We have remained committed to providing prevention education as we seek to reduce sexual violence and its impact in Connecticut.

Susan B. Anthony Project has had a longstanding commitment (since 1983) to its community residents to address sexual violence. I ask you to keep the level of the State's longstanding commitment to its residents and that you keep the level of funding for rape crisis intervention and prevention services in the Governor's budget.

Thank you for your consideration of my request on behalf of the survivors of sexual violence in northwestern Connecticut.